

Observations on certain Names proposed in Dr. Verity's paper on the Rhopalocera Palæarctica in the Collection of Linnæus. By Dr. KARL JORDAN. (Communicated by the President.)

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HAVING had an opportunity of reading Dr. Verity's interesting and important investigation of the Linnean Palæarctic butterflies, I should be glad to make a few observations concerning the names proposed by that author in substitution of those now in currency.

It must be admitted that the Linnean specimens are of great historical interest, and Dr. Verity knows the Palæarctic butterflies so well, that his identifications of the Linnean specimens may be accepted as perfectly correct, and the specimens and labels claimed to be Linnean by Dr. Verity may be regarded as undoubtedly genuine.

On the other hand, there is no proof positive that these specimens are those from which Linnæus drew up the descriptions for the 'Syst. Nat.' ed. X. (1758); in the absence of such proofs we cannot follow Dr. Verity in according them the status of "types."

The utmost care and circumspection should be exercised before a change of name is proposed, and if there is any doubt as to the necessity of the change, no change should be made. Even if the Linnean specimens could be proved to be "types," some of the changes in nomenclature proposed by Dr. Verity would nevertheless be unwarranted and would give rise to just and strong protests, *e. g.* in the case of *Papilio podalirius*. Three examples different in character may suffice as a criticism of Dr. Verity's arguments.

a. *Papilio podalirius*.—The name was based by Linnæus in 1758 on recognisable figures of the Central European Scarce Swallowtail. It is entirely indifferent from a nomenclatorial point of view whether Linnæus had seen a specimen or not. Names are frequently being proposed for species known to the author only from figures or descriptions, and such names are valid.

b. *Apatura iris*.—The *iris* of 1758 is composed of two species, one bearing an ocellus both on the fore and the hind wing, and the other species having a distinct ocellus only on the hind wing. The description of 1758 only mentions the ocellus of the hind wing, and therefore applies strictly to the species generally known as *iris*. Moreover, in the case of composite species any subsequent author is at liberty to restrict the name to one of the species. This was done in 1776 by Schiffermüller, who gave the name of *ilia* to the bi-ocellate species. It is entirely indifferent from a nomenclatorial point of view that Linnæus has added a manuscript note to the original

description. This note—posterior to 1758, and to the effect that *iris* has an ocellus on both wings—may, however, be taken as evidence that Linnæus received specimens of the bi-ocellate species after 1758.

c. *Argynnis adippe*.—The Linnean description applies equally well to the silver-spotted form of *niobe* as to the insect generally known as *adippe* (= *cydippe* preocc.), although Esper (in 1782) was emphatic on the point that the description best fitted the species he figured as *adippe*. If the female from the Linnean collection can be proved to be the one on which the name *cydippe* was based in 1761, a change of name would be necessary in accordance with the law of strict priority. That proof it will be difficult or impossible to furnish, and some doubt will remain as to whether Esper in 1782 was really wrong in figuring as *adippe* L. the insect known under that name ever since.

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